

we are going to pay volunteers for paid volunteer programs, and we can dig up \$50 billion here or there for Mexico. We cannot make these wrong choices again.

REPUBLICANS ASKED TO PASS CLEAN DEBT LIMIT

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. RADANOVICH). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California [Mr. MILLER] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, there is a lot of revisionist history going on here on the other side.

First let us understand something. The demand was that the President would submit a 7-year CBO-scored balanced budget. The Republicans came saying, "He won't do it, he won't do it." He did it. They called off the negotiations. Apparently they were not serious about that.

They spent 50 hours at the White House. The leaders of the legislative branch, Senator DOLE, Speaker GINGRICH, and the President of the United States, first time in history, high-level negotiations, at the 50-hour point after conferring on a number of topics, the President put down a budget that was CBO-scored, 7 years, balanced the budget, and the Republicans said the meetings are off. Why did they do that? Because apparently they cannot stand success.

So now they want to up the ante, and what they want to suggest is what they are now prepared to do is to jeopardize the credit rating of the United States of America, to put this Government into default, and to potentially cost American families billions of dollars because they want to play fast and loose with the debt of this country and the debt limit.

They should not be allowed to do that. They should not be allowed to cost the American people billions of dollars by leaving town tomorrow. I guess they are going to stay to hear Jacques Chirac, the Prime Minister of France, and they are going to listen to him and then they are going to leave for 3 weeks and come back, apparently on the 26th or the 27th, 2 days before the debt limit expires, and play brinksmanship with the White House or with themselves.

Or really what they are doing is, they are going to play brinksmanship with the American people and their families. Because of the speculation and going down to the wire, people in the bond market will make decisions, the price of bonds will go up or they will not go up, and all of the American families that have automobile loans, that have adjustable rate mortgages on their home, that have a credit card whose interest rate is tied to indexes, who have home loans that are tied to indexes, all of those people will immediately be disadvantaged because the Republicans decided they want to leave town for 3 weeks.

I guess they want to leave town for 3 weeks because their program is not working. Someone just said they will not put the President's budget on the floor. No, the Republicans will not put the President's budget on the floor. That was the decision today. That is why we are doing 5-minute special orders, because they do not have anything to put on the floor, except we have this huge backlog of business to do.

We have not done the 1996 budget. The 1997 budget is supposed to be getting underway. We have not dealt with the appropriations bills. We have not dealt with the farm bill. We have not dealt with the Endangered Species Act, we have not dealt with the Clean Water Act, we have not dealt with regulatory reform, but yet the Republicans want to go home.

If your children did this, you would say, "Eat your vegetables first before you get dessert." If a corporation did this who was contemplating going into chapter 11 and they said, "We're going to leave town for 3 weeks, we'll get back to you on the day before the default," they would be fired. But somehow the Republican-led Congress can decide that we are just going to take 3 weeks off so Mr. DOLE can go campaign in New Hampshire and in Iowa, and the deficit be damned.

That kind of cavalier attitude is going to cost American families billions of dollars. It is going to cost this country its standing in the credit markets of the world. That should not be allowed.

It was the same cavalier attitude that led to the tragedy of shutting down the Government, to deny American taxpayers the benefits of the Government for which they were paying and to jeopardize the financial stability of Governmental workers and their families. It was unfair, it was rude, it was reckless, and it turned out it was repudiated by the American public; repudiated again as late as yesterday in the Oregon election where the citizens of Oregon chose not to go with an extremist attitude, chose not to go with an extremist agenda but rather to try to go with a constructive individual who is interested in working for change, to bring about real change as opposed to extreme rhetorical charges and rhetorical comments about change.

Mr. Speaker, this Congress should stay here, it should do its work and get its job done. If Mr. DOLE wants to run for President, let him resign as the leader of the Senate and get on with his campaign, and let the American public get the benefit of us meeting the debt limit on a timely basis, on a clean basis, without threats of blackmail, without threats of taking hostages, without threats of shutting down the Government. That is the way we ought to do business.

This obstructionism, this extremism ought to be brought to an end. Maybe the Oregon election will help bring that to an end. Maybe the Oregon elec-

tion will get these people to understand that their agenda is being repudiated as being anti-American and American family.

BOEHNER SEES NO PROSPECT OF DEFAULT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BOEHNER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, there has been an awful lot of talk about the credit of the United States of America. Over the last 15 years, the Congress of the United States has consistently used the statute to increase the debt limit to move their agenda, the congressional agenda, through the White House and into law. We have seen this over these past 15 years by Democrat Congresses.

Over the last year, Republicans in Congress have felt pretty strongly about the need to bring fiscal responsibility to Washington, DC. We have accumulated some \$5 trillion worth of debt that none of us in this room are ever really going to pay off. Our children and our grandchildren are going to pay that off. We are imprisoning our children and our grandchildren by our irresponsibility over the last 25 to 30 years.

So now is the time to do something about it. The President of the United States wants us to give him a clean increase in the debt limit. He wants to put more debt on the backs of our children. What we are going to insist is that we make a down payment, a down payment on saving the future for our children and theirs, a down payment on moving us toward a plan to bring fiscal responsibility to Washington.

Our friends on the other side and the White House are making this big issue about whether we are going to default. Well, there is going to be no default, not now, nor is there going to be any default in the future. We believe that the debt limit is being handled by the Treasury, probably not in a way that I would do it, but it is being handled.

But I have to tell Members the frustration amongst Members on both sides of this Capitol about the refusal of the President of the United States to deal honestly with trying to bring fiscal responsibility to Washington is excessive. We sat through 6 weeks of meetings at the White House over trying to find some agreement on balancing the budget.

I have got to tell Members, looking back over those last 6 weeks, nothing really happened other than we were diddled with. We were props for the cameras at the White House, because the President of the United States in fact made hardly no movement toward any honest effort to balance the budget. Oh, yes, the President wants to agree on some numbers but never agree on the policies that would actually get us there. He wanted to do the same thing the politicians from both sides of

the aisle over the last 30 years have done to the American people, and that is to sell them out.

We are not going to get into a debate with the President about balancing the budget unless it is real. We are not going to do to our children and theirs what has gone on in this town far too long. So if we are going to have a plan to balance the budget, it is going to be with real numbers, it is going to be with real policies that will move us toward actually balancing the budget.

But the President has refused. Negotiations and discussions have stopped. So what we are going to do this year is that we are going to make attempts to get down payments on our plan to balance this budget. One such down payment will come as we bring the debt limit extension to the floor of the House the last week in February.

The President has said that he needs a debt limit extension by March 1. The President will have a debt limit extension by March 1. There is no threat, let me repeat, no threat that this country will default on its debts now, nor is there any threat in the future that we will default on our debt. There is not going to be any default.

But we are going to have a down payment on this debt limit. The Balanced Budget Down Payment Act that we passed last week to extend to the Government funding authority for those six departments or appropriation areas that had not been funded continued that process. We are seeing funding for these agencies reduced over what we spent last year. We are seeing grants by agencies, that have been agreed to by the House and Senate, not allowed to make new grants.

□ 1230

If you look at that one-third of the budget which is discretionary spending, we expected to save about \$23 billion this year. These are real dollars, less spending this year than what we spent in the last fiscal year, and if we continue on this course with continuing resolutions for the balance of this year, we expect to save \$29 to \$30 billion in real spending.

This is a downpayment for our children's future, and it is the right thing for our kids and theirs.

BRING UP A CLEAN BILL TO EXTEND THE DEBT LIMIT

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. RADANOVICH). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. PALLONE] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I listened to what the previous speaker, the gentleman from Ohio, said, and I do have the utmost respect for him. But I just do not understand how he can say some of the things he is saying based on what has been happening in this House in the last year.

The only reason that we can wait until March 1 before we go into default

is because the Secretary of the Treasury, Mr. Rubin, has been doing things basically since November 15 when the debt ceiling expired to try to prevent the Nation from going into default, and he has been criticized by the same Republican leadership for doing that.

I think it should be understood by the American people that the default was a possibility on November 15, because the Republican leadership refused to bring up a clean bill to extend the debt limit, and in fact, some of the Republican leaders have actually called for the Secretary of the Treasury's impeachment because he has been doing what he has to do in order to avoid default.

Now we see the leadership get up and say, oh, there is no problem until March 1; trust us, we will extend the debt ceiling when it comes to March 1. If you are going to do it, why not do it now? Why send us home for 3 weeks after tomorrow and basically risk the possibility that sometime before March 1 that it is not going to happen, or why suggest that you are going to load up this debt ceiling bill with all kinds of budget items that reflect your own ideology, come back here February 26 or 27, just a couple days before this March 1 deadline? There is no question that what the Republican leadership is trying to do here is to hold this Congress hostage just like they did with the Government shutdown. They said, "We are going to shut the Government down. If you do not go along with our budget, which is cut Medicaid, cut Medicare, cut environmental programs, cut educational programs, if you do not go along with this, we are going to shut the Government down." They did that several times.

Now they are doing the same thing again. They are saying, "We are going to send you home so you cannot sit here and debate this or try to come to a reasonable conclusion on this. We are going to bring you back 2 or 3 days before this March 1 deadline, default deadline, that we have engineered essentially because we have not passed a clean debt ceiling, and we are going to then force you to our own ideology, to these same budget cuts. It is only going to be a down payment." Now it is not going to be the full-blown cut in Medicare, Medicaid, environmental programs, education, student loans. It is just going to be a down payment on that.

I maintain it is the same thing. It is the same hostage environment. It is the same idea if you do not go along with our plan, then we are going to hold the Government hostage, either shut it down, or now, send it into default.

How can sending this Government into default or decreasing or destroying the United States' credit rating possibly be the responsible thing to do? If I listened to the previous speaker's statements, he basically was saying in a somewhat, it seemed to him logical sense, we do not have to worry about

this, because it is more important how the down payment and how these budget cuts that he has proposed, than it is to preserve the Nation's credit rating. That does not make any sense.

The responsible thing is to preserve the credit rating. If the Nation goes into default, our budget situation, our financial situation is in critical condition. We are going to have higher interest rates. We could have a possibility where other countries, central banks in other countries or pension funds, decide they want to start selling our Government bonds. We do not know what our securities are going to be worth. We do not know what the impact is going to be of the higher interest rates not only on the Government but also on individuals who may have their mortgage rates go up or other interest rates that they have to face or their car payments or whatever. The potential, the real potential, exists for an economic downturn not only in this country but around the world.

We are going to risk that? How could that possibly be the responsible thing to do?

I would maintain over and over again that this Republican leadership has gone haywire. Some of us on the Democratic side have described them as a bunch of crackpots. No one, no one who is involved in the Nation's finances would ever suggest that it makes sense for us to threaten default, to even use it as a tool of Government policy. It makes no sense at all if you are concerned about the Government, if you are concerned about the economy, if you are concerned about where this country is going in terms of creating jobs and making it possible for us to have an economic upturn rather than an economic downturn.

Let me tell you, this is not pie in the sky. We have already heard statements from some of the leading credit rating firms. Moody's, I think a week or two ago, came out and said the possibility of a default or the effect on the credit rating could be devastating to the Nation's economy. We have had statements this morning in our Democratic Caucus. We had statements from various Department heads who pointed out what the impact would be. Donna Shalala, Secretary of Health and Human Services and Welfare, she said that if we do not pay our bills March 1, \$26 billion in Social Security payments are threatened, \$1 billion in veterans' payments are threatened, civil service payments and survivor annuities.

These are people that are going to be negatively impacted, the little people, by this Republican default.

REPUBLICANS ARE WORKING TO BALANCE THE BUDGET

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina [Mr. JONES] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. JONES. Mr. Speaker, I was home the last couple of weeks, and I represent eastern North Carolina, the